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A  
SERMON,

PREACHED

IN

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, MANCHESTER,

ON

*Thursday, May 3d.*

being the  
COMMENCEMENT  
of the

**Weekly Evening Lecture**

LATELY  
INSTITUTED

by the

ASSOCIATED CLERGY

in the

TOWNS

OF

MANCHESTER and SALFORD.

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BY J. CLOWES, M. A.

*W*  
Rector of the said Church.

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## P R A Y E R.

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**P**REVENT us, O LORD, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy Name, and by thy mercy obtain everlasting life. Especially, we entreat thee, be present with thy servants in the particular work on which we are now entering. Endue thy ministers with grace, to declare unto thy people thine everlasting counsels. Give thy people grace also to profit by the same, that *both he that soweth, and he that reapeth may rejoice together*. For this purpose grant us the spirit of repentance from dead works, and sincere conversion unto thee the living GOD. Open our eyes to see the singular dangers with which at this day we are encompassed, and may thy judgments prove the blessed means of conducting us to thy righteousness, by convincing us that our only security is in thee, and the ways of thy commandments. So will we learn to praise thee more and more, and the work which we are beginning this night, shall be continued unto thy glory and the increase of thy church and kingdom, by *turning many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto Thee*, their GOD and Redeemer.

We desire to conclude these our imperfect prayers in that most perfect form which thou thyself hast taught us—Our Father, &c.

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Jer. XXXI. 6.

THERE SHALL BE A DAY THAT THE WATCHMEN UPON THE MOUNT EPHRAIM SHALL CRY, ARISE YE, AND LET US GO UP TO ZION, UNTO THE LORD OUR GOD.

THE *day* here pointed at by the Prophet, when the watchmen upon the Mount Ephraim were to lift up their voices, and call the people to *go up to Zion unto the LORD their God*, should appear to have been some *extraordinary* day, marked by some *particular* and *extraordinary* circumstances, which bespoke the expediency of a *particular* and *extraordinary* cry. For it cannot be supposed, but that *the watchmen upon the Mount Ephraim*, in the customary and common exercise of their sacred ministry, had *ordinarily* proclaimed to the Jewish people the call of their GOD to come up unto his holy and beloved city. It can hardly be conceived, I say, that they had been totally negligent in the discharge of obligations bound so fast upon their consciences by the sanctions of their heaven-born law. But now, on *this day* revealed by the spirit of prophecy, when some new occasion, as it should seem, was to call forth from the ministers of the MOST HIGH, new and encreased exertions; when possibly new corruptions on the part of  
man,

man, by an accumulation of crimes, would excite new alarms ; or, when perhaps new mercies and miracles on the part of GOD, to check the progress of those corruptions, would multiply the obligations to a devout acknowledgment—on such a day, I say, it is not to be wondered at, that the trumpet of the Watchmen of Israel was to blow with a proportionably louder and more urgent sound, *Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, unto the LORD our GOD.*

But be the occasion of this holy cry amongst the watchmen of Israel in the days of old what it may, whether *ordinary* or *extraordinary* ; certain it is, that in our days, the watchmen of our Israel must needs feel themselves impelled by *more than ordinary* motives to adopt the same cry. Who also can presume to say, but that the *signal day* pointed at in my text by the spirit of prophecy, is the *present day* ? Who shall presume to say, but that the ministers of the Gospel at this very hour are those *watchmen upon Mount Ephraim*, of whom the blessed cry was predicted, and by whom it was to be accomplished ? The all-piercing eye of GOD, we know, extends its penetrating views into ages the most remote, and with the same facility discerns events at the distance of *a thousand years, as of one day*. It cannot therefore be pronounced *impossible* ; it may not appear *improbable*, but that these our times are included in the prediction of the ALMIGHTY, and that our present assembly therefore forms a part of the accomplishment of the awful but consolatory prophecy, announcing the holy cry, *Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, unto the LORD our GOD.*

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But did I say, "*this may not appear improbable?*"  
 Alas! The tremendous signs of the times in which we live convert *probability* in this case into *certainty*, and leave no longer the smallest ground of doubt, what is the duty of the Ministers of the Gospel, the present *watchmen upon Mount Ephraim*, at this eventful period. At a day, when the wild licentiousness of opinion begins to confound all order, by disputing all authorities both human and divine; when the sanction of the laws of GOD himself is disallowed, and it is become even a question of debate with many, whether any such laws exist; when that holy revelation from the MOST HIGH, which was intended to influence the life of man to every thing godlike, virtuous, and happy, is converted itself through man's folly, into a source of crimes, by inducing doubt, perversion, and denial; when, added to this outrage against the sovereignty of Heaven, the sovereignty of the Princes of the earth is also assailed, and the restraints of civil jurisdiction are accounted encroachments on human liberty; whilst the just distinctions of civil community are regarded as unjust exceptions to human equality; when, what is alike dreadful, the profaneness of the infidel is cherished and confirmed in too many cases, by the carelessness and inconsistency of those who call themselves believers; whilst men suppose themselves christians, for no better a reason than because they repeat a creed, which they are perpetually contradicting by their conduct; at this day, I say, like this, when vice and folly begin to lift up their heads so boldly, and to threaten destruction to every thing that can be wise and virtuous, orderly and happy, whether in the temporal

poral or eternal, whether in the political, the moral, or the religious interests of mankind,—such a day, surely *the watchmen upon Mount Ephraim* must be struck with total blindness to the sanctity and importance of their sacred character if they do not regard such portentous signs as many signals to *double* their watchfulness—as many alarms to excite a louder and repeated call on their part, to the people committed to their care, “*Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, unto the LORD our GOD.*”

Such then being the multiplied calls upon the Ministers of the Gospel at this day, to a *more than ordinary* diligence in the discharge of the sacred office, I trust it will not be thought foreign to the purpose of our present Assembly, if I endeavour to convince you, that *your* Ministers have been and are duly sensible of the increased obligations imposed upon them by the complication of the times; and if with this view I call your attention to a brief statement of the exertions they have *already* made, in consequence of their convictions, and then proceed to the consideration of the motives which have influenced them, and of the purposes which they have in view, in the institution, whose commencement we are this night met to celebrate.

Let it not however be said, or even suspected, that my design in entering upon these considerations is grounded in any fond or foolish affectation to make a vain display of the labours either of my Brethren or of myself. If I know any thing of my own heart, and of the secret springs of its intentions and thoughts, it is far, very far from harbouring any such silly inclination.

*often*

ostentation of well-doing is in all cases *disgusting*, to say the least of it, but it deserves a worse name when chargeable upon those, who are peculiarly consecrated to the holy office of teaching the world *humility*. Nevertheless, howsoever weak and criminal it may be for the Ministers of GOD to *pride themselves* on their exertions, it by no means follows, that it is either weak or criminal to *make those exertions known*. On the contrary, it is of importance that they should be known, because it is of importance that the Public should have confidence in those who are appointed to conduct them in the ways of salvation. It is of importance therefore, and of the first importance, that they who are taught, should be persuaded to believe that their Teachers are not only *authorized*, but are *anxious* also to instruct them; are not only *exact* in fulfilling *required* duties, but are *zealous* also in stepping beyond the limits of stated engagements, when occasion calls. It is of importance, I say, that by thus holding forth to view the *voluntary* and *free* services of the Ministers of the Altar, the world may be convinced, that the mischievous sarcasm, which we hear every day insinuating, "*that the Clergy do nothing but what they are paid for,*" doth not apply *universally*, whilst it is shewn from facts, that, in *some* instances at least, the christian priest acts from a higher principle than that of gain.

Trusting then, and firmly believing, that you will impute what I am about to say, to its *proper* motive, I hasten to call your attention to what our Ministers have *already* done, in the way of *extraordinary* duty, that they might proclaim more powerfully and extensively to you the blessed cry

of the watchmen on Mount Ephraim, *Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, unto the LORD our GOD.*

It is now about two years ago, since a considerable body of the Clergy, in the towns of Manchester and Salford, formed themselves into an association for the express purpose of *giving fuller effect to their ministerial labours*. On this occasion they reasoned, that the energies of any *single* man, let his zeal be ever so warm, and his activities ever so alert, cannot possibly be so complete or so fruitful, as when aided by the *combined energies* of others. As in all other cases, it is well known, that *an union of counsellors tends to establish counsel*; that the efforts of *many in conjunction* operate to vastly more advantage, than the efforts of each individual acting *separately*. Such was the inducement with your Ministers for forming themselves into an associated body; and they have been taught by experience hitherto that the principles, on which they argued and acted, were well-grounded.

Behold here then the first motion of your Ministers, to elevate their voices with *the watchmen upon Mount Ephraim, and cry, with a more than customary cry, unto the people committed to their charge, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, unto the LORD our GOD!* Your Ministers are joined in a sacred league and covenant of mutual and associated labours, to give fuller effect to this holy cry. It is not any longer a *single* voice alone which calls you to *go up unto Zion*; it is not any longer a *single* guide alone who would conduct you to the LORD your GOD; but you are exhorted and you are directed by *united* admonition and *united* counsel. There is therefore a *conspiracy*—do not be alarmed, neither

neither imagine it to be *against* you; for it is only against your corruptions; it is a *holy plot* formed by the Ministers of the Altar, against those vices and follies, which would either destroy or defile it; it is a *confederation* of the powers of truth against the delusions of error; of the principles of righteousness and salvation against the perversions of iniquity and the secret sources of your destruction. Be not then alarmed at a confederacy like this; but rather let it be your consolation to know, that you are hereby the better guarded against that other confederacy, the confederacy of your spiritual enemies, the powers of darkness and of death, who are ever plotting your ruin: And in the critical hour of temptation; at that most awful and perilous of all moments, when the subtle adversary of your peace presents his enchanting allurements to turn your steps away from *Mount Zion and the LORD your GOD*, to plunge down into the abyss of his own wretchedness and darkness—at this awful and perilous moment, I say, may you derive additional spiritual strength and security from the recollection, that possibly at that very moment your Ministers are assembled before GOD to deliberate about your salvation; to offer up their united supplications for your eternal well-being!

But further—I proceed to another proof of what your Ministers have *already* done, towards giving fuller effect to the cry of *the watchmen upon Mount Ephraim*.

It is now more than a year ago, when a plan was suggested and put into execution by the Clergy as above associated, for *supplying the lower classes of society with religious books*: The ground

or reason of the plan was this: It had been observed that the patrons of infidelity and licentiousness promoted their mischievous purposes principally by the circulation of cheap tracts, containing all their poisonous and destructive opinions: It therefore appeared reasonable, to oppose the enemy in his own way; to turn his own practices against himself; and with this view to be as active in the circulation of the *antidote*, as he was in the circulation of the *poison*. Accordingly the liberality of the public was solicited, to support the expence necessarily attending such a work of charity; and it was not solicited in vain. For the credit of the town and neighbourhood it ought to be recorded, that numbers distinguished themselves by their generous subscriptions on the occasion, and that there is every reason to believe, many more would have given the same honourable testimony of their approbation and support of the plan, had they been applied to. The associated Clergy were thus furnished with the means of executing their purposes, and accordingly they lost no time in the distribution of Bibles, Testaments and other religious Tracts, amounting to several thousands; a more particular account of which distribution is preparing to be laid before the public.

Behold here then another mode, adopted by your ministers, of joining in the cry of *the watchmen on Mount Ephraim*, and saying, with increased energy, and to more complete effect, *arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, unto the LORD our GOD!* It is not their own voices *alone* which they have raised, on this blessed occasion, but they have called to their aid the voices of the most distinguished

guished of the teachers of Israel, whether living or dead : It is not to the *walls of their Churches* that the found of evangelical wisdom has been confined, but they have extended it even to your houses ; they have *let the heavenly manna fall among your tents, and round about your habitations* : It was not on the *temporary* impressi<sup>o</sup>n produced from the pulpit *alone* that they depended, in a point of such infinite concern as your everlasting salvation, but they have provided a means to make that impressi<sup>o</sup>n *perpetual*, and to add to it *new* impressi<sup>o</sup>ns, by supplying you at your own homes with a *constant* instructor in righteousness ; by introducing into your dwellings a teacher who might be *always* at hand, ever exciting *new* hopes and *new* desires to *arise and go unto Mount Zion, unto the LORD your GOD*.

Let these considerations have their due effect on all. Are there any here present, who by their liberality have been the supporters of the above mode of instruction ? Let them rejoice to know that their worldly wealth has been employed to such advantage ; that it is already at work, and will for ages continue so, in checking the progress of infidelity, in instructing ignorance, in confirming evangelical principles, and in conducting thousands of human beings out of the regions of darkness and the shadow of death, to go *unto Mount Zion, unto the LORD their GOD*. And are there any here present, who have not as yet contributed to so beneficial an institution ? Let them seriously consider, (I say this without meaning to disparage other occasions of charity) whether it is possible for them to dispose of their perishable silver and gold in any other way more advantageous

advantageous to the community, or more satisfactory to themselves. Lastly, are there any here present, who have already received the benefit of this institution, by being supplied with bibles, or other religious books? Let them never forget what is *the design* of that supply: Let them never forget, I say, that they have received into their houses a messenger from Heaven, a prophet of the MOST HIGH, a *watchman from Mount Ephraim*, to call them to Mount Zion; and in the hour of careless levity; when the unfaithfulness of the human heart renders divine influence less effectual, and at the same time more forcibly demonstrates its necessity; at that hour, I say, let them recollect the sanctity of the guest whom they have admitted, and in whose presence they stand, and let them act accordingly.

Having thus endeavoured to point out what your Ministers have *already* done, as *the watchmen upon Mount Ephraim*, to call you to Zion, I proceed to consider in the next place what are the particular motives which have influenced them, and what the particular purposes they have in view, in the establishment of the institution, which has given rise to our present assembly.

In entering however upon this part of my subject, I confess I see difficulty; I feel discouragement; not from any suspicion of *your* want of indulgence; still less from any doubt of the sincere and upright intentions of my associated Brethren; but whilst I see it my duty to explain to you the awful motives which have induced your Ministers to call you together on this solemn occasion; whilst I feel it my happiness to unfold to you the blessed purposes which they have in

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view towards you by such a call; I cannot help being affected in some degree with the same sensation which the great Apostle felt, when he exclaimed on a similar occasion, *Who is sufficient for these things?*

You certainly have a right to enquire and to know, *why* you are now assembled together in a manner so *extraordinary* and altogether *new*: And in giving you the necessary information on this point, I ought on my part to be explicit in acquainting you with *the reasons*, which, in the judgment of your Ministers, appear a sufficient warrant for such a *novel procedure*: But in doing this, I ought to set before you, first and principally, the new and uncommon dangers to which you are at present exposed as to your best, that is to say, as to your eternal interests; and in exhibiting those dangers, I ought to present to your view that terrible infection of principles, that pestilence of impious and infidel persuasions, originating with the powers of darkness, which in these our days has spread its malignant influences amongst all ranks and degrees of society, to the almost entire desolation of evangelical truth and purity. I ought to convince you, that eternal death is thus at your very doors, and that your danger is the greater, because, notwithstanding its nearness and its awfulness, it is in general regarded with indifference, and few view it with that anxiety and alarm which it is calculated to excite. When the infection of bodily disease begins to taint the atmosphere, every prudent man is instantly on his guard, and adopts the salutary means which prudence dictates, to repel distemper, and preserve health untainted. He

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is especially cautious of approaching an infected person, or of frequenting such places as are more exposed to contagion. But whence comes it, that in the great concern of spiritual health, the attention necessary to preserve spiritual and eternal life, at a time too when the most pestilential and the most fatal of all diseases ought to excite universal dread—whence, I say, comes it, that we are altogether so regardless of the mischief and so remiss in the application of the means proper to keep it at a distance? For what is the infection of bodily distemper, compared with that which would destroy the soul; which, by corrupting the principles of evangelical life, would consume every virtuous hope, bring down to the grave every moral and religious energy, and totally annihilate that part of man, which alone constitutes man, which alone renders it desirable to be a man, viz. the faculty by which he can attach himself to his MAKER, learn the lessons of the eternal wisdom, and live for ever?

But in unfolding to you the grounds and reasons of our present assembly, there is something else required on my part, besides a mere exhibition of your present *dangers*. I ought to acquaint you further with the provisions made of God for your *security*, and with the intended application of those provisions by your Ministers, under the institution now commencing. With this view, I ought to direct your eyes upward toward heaven, to behold the fair Daughter of Zion, whose name is RELIGION, descending from her heavenly FATHER, to bless all families of the earth. I ought to make you sensible, how her eagerness to bless increases with

the dangers with which she sees you encompassed; and how her power to protect, so far from being weakened by opposition, acquires new vigour and energy from the attempts of her foes to destroy her. Aware of that pestilential infection, which is at this day extending its deadly ravages so widely, she is provided with all healing medicines to prevent or to remove contagion. For behold in her hand a BOOK! It is the WORD of GOD, the fountain of the eternal wisdom, from whence flows *the water of life*; and the everlasting law established concerning this *water* is, that whosoever drinketh of it is rendered immortal, so that neither sickness nor death have power to hurt him, according as it is written, “*Every thing shall live whither the RIVER cometh.*”\* This *healing water* RELIGION is disposed to give even to her enemies who reject it, on whom she seeks no revenge, but to receive them again into the bosom of her peace: They may indeed deprive themselves of her salutary medicines, but they can never deprive her of the will and of the power to dispense them. For O! the *fountain of life* still continues to flow in an uninterrupted course, and as it flows, it communicates life, and health and vigour, and blessedness indescribable and inconceivable, to all such as are wise to drink; convincing them that it is from GOD, by the most powerful of all arguments, viz. the effect it produces on their lives and conversations, the spirit of charity with which it quickens, the spirit of truth with which it enlightens, the blessed hopes with which it cheers,

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the omnipotent aid by which it supports and protects.

Such are the objects with which I ought to make you acquainted, in order to unfold fully the grounds and reasons of our present assembly. But herein I am free to confess my utter insufficiency, being alike unable to convey to you any just idea either of the magnitude of the danger, which at present threatens you, or of the means of divine protection, which are ever proportioned to human exigencies.

Leaving therefore this subject to the future discussion of my more able brethren, I shall content myself at present with saying, that the consideration of the encreasing perilous state of your eternal interests is the sole motive which has induced your Ministers at this time to adopt an extraordinary mode of security and protection. They have seen the *wolf coming to scatter the sheep*, a wolf too of uncommon size and fierceness, and they are desirous, if possible, to drive the sheep into a safe fold. They have seen a terrible storm gathering, a tempest of more than ordinary violence, and they are eager, ere it be too late, to pilot your ship into a safe harbour. They have looked upon the valley of this lower world, and behold! they see it filled with new and strange disorders; it is no longer either a quiet or a safe place to abide in; they are earnest therefore to conduct you to a surer resting place, even to that *holy hill of Zion*, which is elevated far out of the reach of earthly confusion and disturbance; where there is no dark cloud to cause obscurity, no thunder to alarm, no lightning to destroy. In short, to speak plainly, and without a metaphor, your Ministers wish to call you at this awful juncture, with a  
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louder call than usual, unto the LORD your GOD, to take a faster hold than heretofore on his covenant, to secure his favour more securely, and with this view, to declare a deeper rooted enmity against all sin; to bid a more lasting adieu to every false and forbidden joy; to watch more diligently against the multiplied snares laid for you by the treacherous adversaries of your peace; that so you may be at fuller liberty to *go up unto Mount Zion, unto the LORD your GOD.*

We cannot indeed *add* to, any more than the infidel can *take from*, the awful sanctions of the Gospel. Independent alike on the assent or dissent of man, death and judgment, Heaven and Hell, will continue to be the same sober certainties, the same eternal realities. They continue also to be the same *approaching* realities, and to approach with the same steady and constant pace. Our faith cannot accelerate, neither can our unbelief retard their motion. For behold! whilst I am now speaking, time is passing rapidly away, and eternity coming fast upon us; this visible world of shadows is about to disappear, and the invisible world of enduring substances is hastening to convince us, that it is not a shadow, it is not a dream, as some are weak enough to imagine, but that on the contrary, every thing unconnected with it is both a shadow and a dream. We may indeed still doubt, we may indeed still disbelieve, and fall asleep in our unbelief to all sense and apprehension of these things, which so infinitely concern us. But can it be safe, or can it be prudent thus to close our eyes and shut up the senses which GOD has given us? Can it be prudent, I say, to wait till the serpent bites, to be convinced of its poison?

to doubt and to dispute about the fire, whilst it is approaching to consume us? never to believe in a future recompense of reward, till we are taught its reality by the loss of it? Surely there is neither security nor wisdom in such infatuation of conduct. Surely it were far safer and wiser to act according to the tenor of those words of the eternal truth, which saith, *These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.\**

Let it not however be supposed, that in calling you thus *to go up to Mount Zion, unto the LORD your GOD*, your Ministers wish to separate you from your engagements in this lower world. No, —they wish rather to make you more zealous and alert in fulfilling those engagements, by calling you to the operation of those eternal principles, which can alone enable you to fulfill them to advantage. It is a delusive, it is a destructive idea, on the one hand to suppose, that we can fulfill our duties aright to our fellow-men, without first fulfilling our duties to GOD; and on the other hand, to imagine it possible to be faithful servants of GOD, and not be faithful servants also to the community in which we live—to conceive that we may be religious without morality; pious without charity; holy without justice; that we can discharge divine duties, whilst we are careless about human ones; that we can be citizens of Heaven, whilst we are regardless of the obligations imposed upon us as citizens of this world; that we can respect the authority of GOD, and at the same time despise the authority of man delegated from GOD.

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Against such fatal persuasions, your Ministers will not fail continually to warn you, by inculcating the necessity, in the first place of fearing GOD, by regarding his divine Law; and then, in the second place, of becoming good citizens, exemplary in your conduct and conversation under your several relationships, whether as masters of families, as husbands, wives, children, servants, subjects, merchants, manufacturers, mechanics, remembering those instructive words of Jesus Christ on another occasion, but applicable also on this, *What GOD hath joined together, let not man put asunder*; and again, *These things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone*.

After having thus explained to you the motives and purposes by which your Ministers feel themselves influenced on the present occasion, need I add what are the new, the encreased obligations imposed on you, from this ground of the encreased exertions of your teachers? It is happy for me, that on this subject you have an infinitely higher, an infinitely more powerful Monitor, I mean, the ALMIGHTY himself, who, in the tremendous signs of the times, speaks a language of admonition; utters a voice of awful instruction; which none can misinterpret, and with an authority, which, I trust, none will be disposed to gainsay. *When thy judgments are in the earth, it is written, the Inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness*,—and this being eternally true, I have only to refer you to those judgments; I have only to bid you open your eyes to what is passing around you; and then you will want no further teaching, how the redoubled labours of your Ministers, and the motives thereto, ought to affect you. Nevertheless, there

there is one consideration, which I cannot help pressing more particularly upon your attention, in regard to divine judgments, and which is the more necessary at this time, because, notwithstanding its singular importance, it does not appear to have excited that notice which it deserves. The consideration I mean is this — all divine judgments bespeak manifestly an increase and accumulation of the powers of evil; and an increase and accumulation of the powers of evil imply with equal certainty an increase of difficulty, in withstanding them; and an increase of difficulty argues further an increase of danger and of hazard. This consideration, I say, does not appear to have been sufficiently attended to; for was it sufficiently attended to, that our salvation is by this means become more hazardous, and consequently more doubtful, how would it be possible that our lives and our conduct should remain unaffected by it? For let us suppose this case, that when we went to rest this night, there was *a chance* that our houses might be on fire, and we might be burnt in our beds before morning. Let us suppose *this chance* to be increased even to a *probability*, so that the *hazard* of our being burnt was rather greater than *the hope* of our resting quietly. Should we any of us, under such circumstances, think it safe to be overtaken with deep sleep? Should we not rather watch ourselves, and engage others to watch for us, in a case of such manifest danger? The point is too plain to need insisting upon; and indeed our own conduct at this very moment, in regard to another temporal danger, proves it to be so. For behold! how is all our vigilance excited! how are all our energies and exertions

exertions called forth by the *encreasing hazard* of an assault from our temporal foes! Why then should not an *encrease of hazard* in regard to adversaries so infinitely more dreadful, produce the same effects? It certainly will do so in a ten-fold degree, whensoever our eyes are once opened to see, that our danger in this latter case is ten-fold, yea, ten thousand fold more interesting and more awful than in the former.

\* We read of a great Emperor of old, how, at a time when his life was in imminent danger by reason of a conspiracy formed against it, a friend of his one day put into his hands a paper, containing an account of the plot, and of the danger which threatened him. But the Emperor, being at that time engaged with his courtiers, and more attentive, alas! to ceremony and to compliment, than to a regard for his own security, neglected, ere it was too late, to examine his friend's salutary notice—the consequence was, his enemies succeeded in their designs, and he lost his life—May I trust, beloved, that you will not play the same careless and fatal part that this unhappy Emperor did! May I trust, that now you have had timely notice of an infinitely greater danger which threatens you, you will not suffer either ceremony or compliment, either the business or pleasures of this world, to divert you from a proper and profitable attention to the warning!

To conclude — I have now made you acquainted with the motives which have influenced your Ministers, and with the purposes they have in view, in their present new engagements. I have informed you also of what they have *already* done,

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\* See Plutarch's Life of J. Cæsar.

as watchmen upon Mount Ephraim, to call you unto Zion, unto the LORD your GOD. I have lastly endeavoured to shew how you ought to be affected by these considerations; how your watchfulness over and concern for your everlasting interests ought to be stimulated by the dangers which encompass you, and by the exertions made for your protection. But after all—It is not any encreased zeal or activity of your Ministers—it is not what they have *already* done, or what they intend *in future* to do—neither is it any additional watchfulness or concern on your parts, which can of themselves secure to our present undertaking its full success. Something else is still wanting for the accomplishment of this happy purpose, and that is, the DIVINE BLESSING. *Except the LORD build the house, their labour is but lost that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.\** To give full effect then to our labours, we must be constant in our prayers to the ALMIGHTY, that he would be pleased to bless them. We must call upon GOD to work with us, if we hope that our work may prosper. As we should deem it a vain thing to trust in GOD to do all, without exerting ourselves the powers which he gives us, so we should deem it equally vain, to trust to our own powers alone, without dependance upon their Divine source; without looking to that Omnipotent Redeemer who hath said, *Without ME ye can do nothing.*

Here then lastly, let all our purposes centre, and they cannot fail to be crowned with success. Let us recollect that we are not left merely to our own strength, but that in every virtuous tendency, in every

every holy resolution, the omnipotence of GOD is with us. Let us then now and ever look unto that omnipotence, and implore the infinite blessedness and honour to experience its divine aid, whilst we are workers together with it in that important work of our salvation, which it is so zealous to accomplish.

Thus we may indulge the glorious hope, that our present undertaking, supported by the divine might, and cherished by the divine benediction, will be prosperous and blessed. This night may be to us the beginning of an everlasting day. Impiety and infidelity, those *unclean and hateful birds* of night, will take their eternal flight from our habitations, whilst all the graces of evangelical wisdom, those clean birds of Paradise, those delightful songsters of Heaven, will be fruitful and active to cheer and bless us. The town in which we live, rejecting thus the delusions of that new philosophy which would destroy her, and listening to the voice of that Gospel truth which brings salvation by extirpating folly, will set a laudable example to the world, of repentance, of reformation, and of return to her GOD, henceforth enriching distant nations with the merchandize of her virtues, as she has heretofore done with that of her manufactures. Thus, distinguished by her piety as well as by her ingenuity; active in promoting her eternal interests, alike with her temporal; abounding in the treasures of heaven as well as in worldly wealth; she will become the happy instrument in the hands of GOD of accomplishing his purposes, by hastening that blessed day, which ought to be the object and the end of all our labours, when *The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our LORD and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.\**

